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CURRENT LITERATURE

BOOK REVIEWS

Textile fibers

A book by STIRM¹ on the chemical technology of textile fibers deals with every phase of the derivation and handling of the fibers: source, method of obtaining, physical and chemical character, washing and bleaching of the raw fiber, preparation for stamping and dyeing, and stamping and dyeing themselves. The work covers plant fibers (cotton and various bast fibers, such as flax, hemp, jute, and manila), animal fibers (wool, hair, and silk), mineral fibers (asbestos), and artificially produced fibers from mineral raw materials (glass and mineral fiber) and from plant raw materials (India rubber fiber and artificial silk). The work on plant fibers reminds the botanist of the detail with which these technical workers have studied the histology, chemistry, and physics of cotton, bast, etc. In the case of cotton, one finds a good summary of our knowledge of the histology and microchemistry of the fiber. The chemical composition of the fiber is given, including the substances involved as impurities, with methods of removal. The chemistry of cellulose is dealt with briefly, with various theories as to its molecular weight and structural formula. The behavior of cellulose toward many reagents in various concentrations (acids, bases, salts, oxidizing and hydrolizing agents, and various solvents) is clearly summarized. The changes involved in such processes as bleaching, mercerization, and formation of artificial silk are discussed, along with the theories offered in explanation. The author recognizes many of the problems with cellulose as belonging to the field of colloidal chemistry. The histology and chemistry of bast fibers receive like consideration. The work reminds one that the knowledge useful to the technical worker is often the same as that which is of significance to the "pure" scientist.—WILLIAM CROCKER.

MINOR NOTICES

The Journal of Ecology.—It is rare that a new journal starts off so well as does the *Journal of Ecology*,² the first volume of which is now completed. In 1904 a great advance was made in ecological study in the British Isles by the

¹ STIRM, KARL, *Chemische Technologie der Gespinnstfasern*. xvi+410. Berlin: Gebrüder Borntraeger. 1913.

² The *Journal of Ecology*, edited for the British Ecological Society by FRANK CAVERS. Cambridge University Press (American agent: The University of Chicago Press). Volume I. 1913. Price per annum, \$3.75.